



Putting together the parrot puzzles proved to be quite a challenge at the 1st annual Day of the Parrot.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION ...

"Day of the Parrot" Promotes Conservation in Mexico

by Jack C. Eitniear
Event Coordinator /Director
Center for the
Study of Tropical Birds

It is common knowledge, among those with an interest in parrot conservation in the wild, that many of the species of parrots inhabiting Mexico are at "risk" of extinction. What is not well known is that actions are being taken to assure the future survival of Mexico's parrots.

For example, along the Sierra Madre range, research, habitat preservation, and educational programs are targeting the endangered Maroon-fronted and Thick-billed parrots *Rhynchopsitta ter-risi* and *R. pachyrhyncha*. Parrot biologist Dr. Ernesto Enkerlin H. is spearheading these efforts under the collaborative auspices of the Monterrey-based Instituto de Tecnologia, the newly established conservation organization PRONATURA:northeast, and the Museo de las Aves.

Further south, researchers from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, Instituto de Ecologia are studying the ecology and conservation biology of the Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* in the Lacandon Rain forest of Chiapas. In addition to Scarlet Macaw studies, the "Instituto" is documenting the habitat characteristics of the Military Macaw *Ara militaris* in Cosala, Sinaloa along Mexico's Pacific coast. Both projects are being funded by the Mexican Nature Conservation Fund

and will undoubtedly result in a better understanding of the requirements of these two magnificent macaws.

Along the Gulf Coast where the endangered Green-cheeked (Red-headed) and Yellow-headed Amazon parrots *Amazona viridigenalis* and *A. oratrix* thrive, research also has been ongoing as to their requirements in the wild.

Most recently however a gathering on 5 June 1998 in the city of Aldama addressed the needs of the parrots and their environment. The 126 individuals in attendance to discuss the problem were not scientists however, but students and educators from nine local schools (students ages 10-12). Activities during the day long meeting did not include scientific sessions but rather a giant "parrots and their world" poster-coloring contest, putting together parrot puzzles, making parrot buttons, and conducting group discussions as to the role of parrots in their ecosystem. Further activities included identifying animal tracks in a sand-filled trench and planting live trees in the yard of the Lions Club where the event was conducted.

The first "DIA PARA LA CONSERVACION DE LOS LOROS EN TAMAULIPAS, MEXICO/Day of the Parrot" went extremely well. Much of the credit is due to Mario Vasquez an environmen-

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tal instructor from the Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas in nearby Ciudad Victoria, and his fellow instructors and local school teachers. Financial support for the event included small grants from TRAFFIC:NORTHAMERICA, The Wildlife Preservation Trust International (WPTI), PRONATURA: NoRESTE, and two Arizona avicultural organizations (Arizona Seedcrackers bird club, and the Arizona Bird Breeders). Overall organization and funding was provided by the Center for the Study of Tropical Birds, Inc. (CSTB) of San Antonio, Texas.

Despite being captured for cage birds and displaced by conversion of their forest homes for agricultural pur-



Photos courtesy the Center for the Study of Tropical Birds

Second from right, Jack C. Eitniear (event coordinator and Director of CSTB), assisted the teachers in handing out parrot coloring books and crayons to the poster winners.



One of the 12 groups that worked to produce the best parrot poster later judged by the teachers and organizers.

poses, Mexico's parrots continue to survive. It will likely be the next generation of Mexicans that determines whether man can coexist with parrots in the wild. If the responses of those students in attendance at the first "Day of the Parrot" is any indication, then the future is looking brighter for the parrots of northeast Mexico.

In the meantime, in hopes of further regulating international trade, the Yellow-headed Amazon is slated to be

moved from Appendix II to Appendix I at the next CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) meeting. Planning has also begun for the second "Annual Day of the Parrot."

For more information on how you or your bird club can get involved or contribute to this event write:

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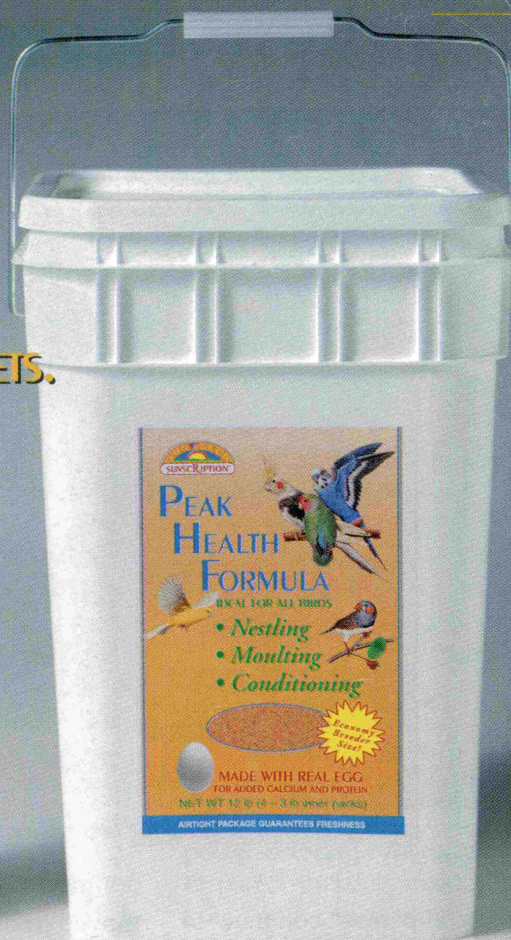
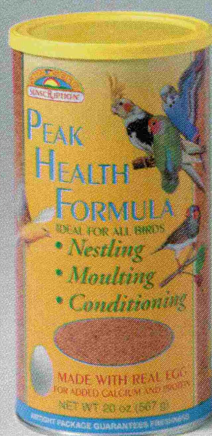
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